

24 FEB 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Acting Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : CINCPAC Proposal to Mine NVN Ports

REFERENCE : CINCPAC 18 2210 Z Jan 67 (SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM/LINKIS)

1. This memorandum is addressed to the CINCPAC estimate of the effects of a proposed mining of the seaports of North Vietnam. The reference cited did not provide data on a companion bombing program against 25 targets in the Haiphong port area so this aspect of the program is not considered in this memorandum.

2. The CINCPAC evaluation differs substantially from the ORR assessment of the effects of a mining program. ORR agrees with CINCPAC that a mining program, particularly one effective against shallow-draft craft, could create a severe disruption of normal transport and economic activity, but does not concur in CINCPAC's evaluation that mining of the ports would reduce Hanoi's capability to support military action in South Vietnam. ORR estimates, to the contrary, that a mining program would not degrade meaningfully the flow of essential military and economic materials into North Vietnam or prevent North Vietnam's continued support of the war in the South. The CINCPAC proposal, in brief, suffers from promising far greater effects than could reasonably be expected. This is particularly true in respect to its claims of the results to be expected from a mining program directed against the port of Haiphong alone.

3. The bullishness of the CINCPAC assessment arises principally from their failure to consider several factors. First among these is CINCPAC's failure to give adequate recognition to Hanoi's demonstrated competence for improvisation and to implement contingency planning (which we must assume to exist) to offset the effects

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OSD review(s) completed.

[redacted]

of a mining program. The proposal understates Hanoi's ability to increase the flow of traffic on its rail connections with Communist China and overlooks completely the potential of road transport to meet new traffic requirements. Finally the proposal seems to base much of its premise on the unwarranted assumption that the bulk of military aid from the USSR moves by sea rather than by rail.

b. Although the CINCPAC proposal implies a mining capability against shallow-draft craft, it is our understanding that this capability will not be an operational capability until May or June of this year.

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Acting Director  
Research and Reports

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